

The Power of Grace illustrated.

IN

SIX LETTERS

FROM A

MINISTER OF THE REFORMED CHURCH

TO

JOHN NEWTON,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY WOOLNETH, LONDON.

Translated from the Original Latin

By WILLIAM COWPER,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE, ESQ.

“The Kingdom of God is not in Word, but in Power.”

1 Cor. iv. 20.

Alisq̃ue et Idem.

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TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL

BY WILLIAM COOPER

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OF THE REFORMED CHURCH

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PREFACE.

THESE Letters are published at the desire of the writer. He is a foreigner, a minister of the reformed church, so styled upon the continent, in contradistinction from the Lutheran. He was once a Sceptic, but now preaches with energy and success, the faith he formerly laboured to destroy.

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This is all I am at liberty to say of him; as he earnestly intreated me to avoid giving any intimation of his name, country or situation: and the request of an absent friend, demands something of that solemn regard, which we usually pay to the dying injunctions of one whom we dearly love, and who confides in us.

Nor have I availed myself of the permission given me, to retrench or alter the manuscript. I publish what I have received, and as I received it; with no other change than from Latin to English. My dear friend the translator is so well known, that I scarcely
need

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need to add, I could have applied to no one more capable of doing justice to the writer, or of giving satisfaction to the reader.

I think the relation will not be thought too minute or circumstantial by competent judges. I mean, by those who are attentive to the workings of the human heart, and who acknowledge and admire the superintendence of a Divine Providence, over the concerns of mankind. They know that the most interesting and unexpected turns in the affairs both of nations and individuals, frequently originate from causes, which to appear-

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ance, are small, and disproportionate. God made us, and not we ourselves ; and he governs us. The time and place of our birth, the first, and every following object, that impresses our minds in infancy, childhood and youth ; our constitutions, tempers, situations, and the successive changes through which we pass, are all under his direction. These form a concatenation of causes and effects, every one of which has either a more remote, or a more direct influence, upon the future life. Like the various parts of the movement of a watch, of which, though some may be thought, comparatively, of more value than others, yet each one,
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in its proper place, is equally necessary to the perfection of the machine. The abuse and perversion of the opportunities with which God favours us, are properly our own; but the due improvement of them must be ascribed to his goodness.

A great part, perhaps the greater part, of those who are born into this world, are removed out of it before they are capable of taking any considerable share in human affairs. But why we, who are now living, were spared when others were taken away; why we escaped, or recovered from those illnesses, calamities or dangers,

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which were fatal to thousands of our own age, and in similar circumstances ; is a secret impenetrable to us, and can only be referred to the good pleasure of him, who worketh according to the counsel of his own will. How different might the state of things have been, from what it is at present, if Alexander, Cæsar, and a thousand other persons, whose names stand prominent in history, had never been born, or had died in the month !

In like manner, though a depraved nature is common to our whole species, and the effects, more or less, are universally felt ; the event is not, to all persons,

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persons, the same. The way of transgressors is always hard; that it is not always fatal, is owing to the mercy of God. Pride, evil-temper, ungoverned passions and appetites, hurry on many from bad to worse, from one degree of misery to a greater, and at length to ruin. While others who tread in the same steps, and are involved in the like distresses, are led, in the time of their extremity, and when the help of men is vain, to seek help from God, and are not disappointed. Their afflictions, like those of the prodigal in the parable, are sanctified, to bring them to their right minds. They are convinced of their sins, they repent, they

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they believe the gospel, and are saved. In themselves, they are no better than those who, being often reproved, harden themselves still more, and persist in their obstinacy and wickedness till they perish.

The grace of God is a universal medicine. The sovereign, infallible, and only remedy for the maladies, and miseries of the mind. It is equally adapted to persons of every age and nation, however circumstanced or situated. It teaches to some, the use of general knowledge, and to others, supplies the want of it. It can make the rich humble, and the poor happy. It is necessary

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sary for the most respectable and decent; and it is sufficient for those who have been profane, and abandoned, whenever they are sensible of the need of it, and are disposed to seek it in the way of God's appointment.

Last year I had the pleasure of selecting from the papers of a young woman, what I could, without hesitation, propose as *The Christian Character exemplified*. She was in private life, had no great advantages of education, nor much acquaintance with the world. Her conduct was not stained with gross vice, but she lived without God, till he was pleased to convince

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her of her sin and folly, and to give her a hope in his mercy. From that time old things passed away; she became a new creature, was an ornament to her religious profession, and a blessing to all her connections. She bore her trials with patience, and met death with comfort.

Very different from hers was the character of the writer of these letters, previous to his conversion. He was a scholar. Proud of his abilities and attainments, and trusting to his reasoning powers, he disdained to think with the vulgar, and was too wise, in his own esteem, to be instructed by divine

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revelation. And though he was not an avowed libertine in practice, his restraints were not owing to principle, or to conscience. But while a stranger to God, he was a stranger to peace. Like a ship in a storm without rudder or pilot, he was hurried about by the violence of tumultuous passions, till he was weary of life. In such a state of mind, and at such a crisis, the light of truth broke in upon his mind. The Lord spake, and it was done. The storm was hushed. The man was suddenly and totally changed. The servant of sin, became the devoted servant of God. He now accounts all things but loss, for the excellency of the know-

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knowledge of that Saviour, whom, formerly, he despised and blasphemed.

The fact is evident and incontrovertible. Let philosophers account for it, if they can, upon any other grounds than what the scripture assigns. But let them be serious, and not think to answer or evade the enquiry, by the stale unmeaning cry of enthusiasm. They cannot thus satisfy others; nor even themselves.

I have subjoined, by way of appendix, some extracts from a letter which I have received, since the others were sent to the press.

That

PREFACE.

That the perusal of this narrative
may be accompanied with a divine
blessing to every reader, is my sincere
prayer.

JOHN NEWTON.

Coleman-Street Buildings,

June 5, 1792.

IN-

PREFACE.

That the Journal of this narrative
may be accompanied with a divine
blessing to every reader, is my sincere
prayer.

John Newton.

Edinburgh: Printed by
James Macmillan.

IN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER,

Oct. 11, 1789.

I HOPE to find that you have safely received a letter which I wrote to you in April. In that I informed you that yours, after wandering, as I suppose, to many different places, had at length reached me, and that I had read it with pleasure and advantage.

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To that letter I now add six others, in which I give you a more circumstantial narrative of my life. Should you judge that they may possibly be useful to others, promote the glory of our God, and be instrumental in any measure to the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, and for such reasons chuse to publish an English translation of them, do it I beseech you, making such omissions, additions, and alterations as to yourself shall seem adviseable.—I know not that since I left the university I have written any thing in Latin, except my letters to you. To write in that language is to me difficult and inconvenient. Wonder not, therefore, if in these additional letters

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letters you find the style, not infrequently, barbarous. Leisure to polish them I had none, neither had I a Dictionary at hand to consult occasionally, for which reason you may now and then, perhaps, encounter a word that is hardly Latin. I have also written in much haste; nevertheless what I have written I well know to be perfectly conformable to truth.

Your's,

CHRISTODULUS.

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LETTER I.

DEAREST FRIEND AND BROTHER,

THE narrative itself of my life must be my subject now. In this and the following epistles it is my wish to give you a short sketch of my condition, such as it was, prior to the time (blessed be that time for ever) in which it pleased the Lord, according to the purpose of his free and everlasting love,

to call me out of darkness into his marvellous light.

I was born in the year 1764, of worthy parents and of respectable condition, to whom for their attention and affection manifested in the care they took of my education, I am in the highest degree indebted. Till I had reached the sixth year of my age I was trained in my own country. My mother, who was of the flock of our Lord, was careful to instruct me in the principles of the true religion, in my childhood. I was teachable and diligent. Even at so early a day I discovered symptoms of a desire to arrive in time at the ministry of the gospel; to which office I was

I was indeed destined by my parents, and especially by my pious mother.

In several illnesses, and even dangerous ones, with which I was seized during my tender age, I was favoured with God's singular providential care; and again and again snatched from the borders of the grave.—I dare not attempt to describe exactly the habitual state of my mind at this time with respect to religion, yet I believe I may venture to assert, that I was not altogether destitute of serious sentiments, and affections.

At six years of age I was sent to U that I might be initiated in

the French language. Having, in the course of two years, made some progress in it, I entered on the rudiments of Latin, always desirous to learn, and, of my own accord, sufficiently inclined to study. My principal bias however was to history, which, unbidden by my master, I endeavoured to search diligently and to commit to memory. My memory was extremely quick and retentive, so that I could without much difficulty get by heart, retain and detail, in their just order, the names of countries and cities, of kings and illustrious persons, the principal events that had occurred in the world, and its most remarkable national revolutions.

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I neither know nor believe that, at this period, religion was much my object. To the best of my remembrance I cared little about it, and allowed myself in the customary crimes of inconsiderate youth, with no serious reflexion, or anxiety about consequences.

At the end of two years or thereabout, if I mistake not, I returned to spend some time at home.—My father had just conceived a design to send me to an academy at B... for the sake of perfecting me in the Latin language. All things were ready, and I was on the point of departure. But an illness, with which I was seized in that very moment,

moment, gave occasion to a delay, during which, my father changed his purpose, otherwise the complexion of my lot had been far different; but the Lord interposed to prevent it, for the greater manifestation of his glory in my particular case, and for the performance of his own counsels, which I shall never cease to admire.

A certain friend of my father's, with whom both he and my mother were particularly intimate, had a daughter nearly of my own age, as eminent for the beauty of her person as for modesty and gentleness of disposition. About this time it was that I began to feel a sincere and strong affection for her, and

and it was attended with singular consequences to myself, such as ought never to be forgotten. But had I gone, according to my father's intentions to the academy at B. . . , it is probable that my passion would either soon have evaporated, or never at least would have gained such an ascendancy, in a situation so distant from my own country, and where occasions of seeing her could not possibly occur. The providence of God, therefore, in a wonderful manner put a negative on this journey.—Oh how precious are thy thoughts, O God! How great is the sum of them! When I would rehearse them they are more in number than the sands of the sea.—At last I

was sent to N... for the purpose of learning Latin. There I lived with hardly any concern about religion, my parents seldom seeing me, or any other person who might strictly enquire in what manner I proceeded. Hardly any restraints could be devised sufficient to withhold me from the pursuit and indulgence of my own will and pleasure. The public ordinances and other means of grace I neglected. I rarely read the scripture, and I believe more rarely still adverted to the necessity of prayer.

Yet, negligent as I was, once or twice it happened that I fell into religious meditations. I remember that,

that, sometimes, when I had heard a sermon on the subject of regeneration and conversion, I felt some small desire of them; but the lively conviction of sin, the fear and the anguish which I understood to be the harbingers of conversion, seemed to me so undesirable and even dreadful, that they made me tremble at the thought of it. Sometimes again, I would meditate on faith in Christ, asking myself—What is faith? What is it to believe on Christ? To come to him? To be united to him? But whatever thoughts or imaginations I had on these subjects, they were never satisfactory to myself. One while I accounted faith in Christ to be merely
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an assent to revealed truth; at other times I supposed it to consist in prayer to Christ. Yet I could not rest in either of these opinions. He who assented to the truth, or directed constantly his prayers to Christ, did not seem to me for any such reasons to be united to him, but to continue still at a great distance from him. Christ is in heaven—we are on earth—not could I see how union between the soul and him could be effected by either of those predicaments, in which I supposed faith in Christ to consist. I had no idea of the spiritual presence of Christ, or of the operations of the Holy Spirit. It is no wonder, therefore, that in all my fancies concerning
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what it is—to come to Christ—to believe in Christ—I still perceived a wide interval left between man and his Redeemer. Sometimes also the thought of death and eternity would strike me with some terror, but it was of short duration, and produced in me no serious endeavours after my own conversion.

Sin in almost any shape was welcome to me, nor have I a doubt that I should have fallen into open wickedness of every kind, unless the providence of God, pride, ambition, and a degree of natural bashfulness had prevented. I wasted much time in follies and trifles, and perhaps my whole

whole time had been so wasted but for the vehement ambition which I ever cherished, to acquire the favour of my teachers and superiority to my school-fellows. These were objects of my ardent and continual pursuit. I may add also, that remarkable attachment to the study of history to which I voluntarily devoted not a few of my hours. Yet after all, I gave not my whole reading-time to useful and laudable exercises in that way. It happened not seldom, that, fascinated by romance-reading to a wonderful degree, I made such fables my chief delight; not excepting even those that were most absurd and evidently hostile to the principles of both natural and revealed

revealed religion. A vast number, and all sorts of such books, I read with exquisite pleasure, and with an appetite insatiable. Their effects, and their only effects, were an encreasing depravation of taste, and a stronger irritation of all my carnal desires. Some intervals I found at this period in which my love of Miss E....., whom I had few opportunities of seeing, was much diminished; yet was it not altogether extinguished, but encreased afterward to a great degree, in proportion as an apparent probability of success excited it.

I pursued my studies in the academy at U.... with much diligence. I acquired

acquired the love and the applausè of my preceptors, and indeed such commendations from all quarters as made me excessively vain, and every day more and more so,

A short time before I bade farewell to common schools, I met with an accident that confined me some days at home. My indisposition did not appear to be at all dangerous, but on this occasion my conscience was terribly alarmed, and that unfounded tranquillity in which I had hitherto indulged myself, was wonderfully disturbed. I prayed with much seriousness for the pardon of my sins, but especially for recovery. I promised every

every thing, bound myself by fervent vows to the performance, and took up solemn resolutions to lead a very different life in future. Shedding many tears, and with unusual emotions of mind, I daily read and prayed over several psalms of David, particularly the sixth, the thirty-eighth, and the sixty-ninth.—In a word, my conversion never seemed nearer or more certain than at this time. But alas! all was as the morning cloud and as the early dew which passeth away. I neither knew the glory and holiness of God, nor myself. I was soon healed, and, almost as soon, my serious sentiments and religious affections all vanished like smoke, together. So well

was I instructed, and with such an unhappy dexterity, to rid myself of all my religious feelings and promises, that from that time forth I seldom or never troubled myself about them. Except in this instance, when my mind was thus agitated, I had rarely an idea of a serious and religious cast, unless when great danger seemed to threaten me, as in some violent storm perhaps of thunder and lightning. But the effect was quickly over, and differed much from the agitation of mind above-mentioned, both in its efficacy and duration; though even that left no valuable fruit behind it; but rather served only to enhance my criminality, as from that time forth I defiled my-

self

self with all manner of evil, without either conscience or consideration. My dear mother would frequently admonish and exhort me to prayer and conversion, but I disdained all her counsel and treated it as nothing worth. A proof that the Lord's time was not yet come. I was permitted yet to evidence far more plainly the wickedness of my heart, and my enmity against God.

I am,

Your's entirely,

Aug. 22, 1789.

CHRISTODULUS.

Tell with all manner of evil without
 effort confidence or confidence. My
 dear mother and frequent mention
 and expect me to give and comfort
 now, but I declined all and counsel
 and treated it as nothing worth. A
 word that the Lord's love was not yet
 come. I was surprised and to evidence
 the more plainly the weakness of my
 heart, and my enemy against God.

I am

Your's affectionately

A. M. 1750

A. M. 1750

LETTER II.

DEAR AND REVEREND BROTHER!

I HAD not hitherto been so far left to myself, as to attempt to call in question the principles of all religion. But no sooner was I advanced to the university, than I began to amuse myself with various subtleties and sophistries, and to indulge a genius fanciful and wanton in the extreme; I framed and put together all

manner of nice and specious reasonings, which the prince of darkness, whose willing servant I was, understood how to impress on my mind with such force and effect, that in a short time I doubted even the existence of a God. All the arguments, if such they must be called, that are customarily adduced against his existence, I seized with the avidity that belongs to a heart partial and prone to every thing absurd and abominable. I remember that to a certain friend of mind, in presence too, if I mistake not, of several others, I endeavoured with much earnestness and zeal to prove, that the same insolvable difficulties that cleave to the idea of eternity and the necessity
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of the world's existence, are found also in the idea of an eternal God existing from necessity. Thus rashly, wretch that I was ! both by thought and word, did I dare to fight openly against my Creator and Benefactor, to whom I owe life and breath and all things, and in whom, even at the moment of my wicked attempt to make his very being questionable, I lived and moved and had my own being.

Justly, while I was making public profession of a mind so much at war with him, might God have crushed me with his mighty hand, and have given me, by dreadful experience, to know, not his existence only, but the majesty of his existence.

existence also. But his ways are not as our ways, neither are his thoughts as our thoughts. His long-suffering and compassion (I have been taught it by indubitable proofs) are both infinite. He spared me, that to eternity I might record the praise of his adorable grace, and be, myself, a signal monument of his free love, and of his unspeakable power and wisdom. This gracious God permitted not these atheistical notions to root themselves deeply in my mind. The voice of conscience, contemplation on the works of God, and instruction drawn from useful texts of scripture, conspired to weaken them day by day, so that in a short time, if they did not entirely leave me, at least they

returned but seldom, and never won my hearty assent again.

In the first year of my residence at the university I was initiated, and made some proficiency, in the rudiments of the Hebrew language, and in some branches also of philosophy. But following, as it happened, an order and method of study not the most convenient, I reaped less fruit of my labours than I had expected.—I squandered not a little of my time in vain conversation and in the reading of useless and hurtful books. Listening to my preceptors always with attention, and answering them in such manner as to win applause, though with an appearance
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of much modesty, I could not fail to please them. But alas! I defiled myself in the mean time with many sins, known only to God and myself, and which I should not dare to mention even to my dearest earthly friend. The providence of God so ordered it, that ambition and a certain degree of natural bashfulness would not suffer the depravity and wickedness of my heart to break forth into open and daily enormities. Accordingly I was in show, modest, but in reality a stranger to all modesty and to all religion. My polluted heart was full of evil concupiscence, and the admonitions of conscience notwithstanding, I delivered myself over secretly to the commission
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of such sins as I ought never to recollect without the utmost shame, and the most sensible sorrow.

I almost always neglected the public ministry, and attended but little to the few sermons at which I was present. Seldom I made any use of my Bible, and if I ever looked into it, it was only when, in the course of my studies, I had occasion to refer to it. At times, indeed, a sudden fear of death and hell would seize me, but it soon ceased, and was insufficient to make me abhor and discontinue even those of my practices that were most abominable. Sin maintained such an absolute dominion over me that it baffled all reasonings,
and

and frustrated all the strokes of conscience.

In the second year of my collegiate, at the time when I was about to return from my father's house to the university, I was suddenly attacked by a bilious fever, which had the appearance of being dangerous. Yet was I entirely void of care, felt neither fear nor solicitude, but with an obdurate heart expected the consequences. I cannot recollect that I experienced one moment's concern for the salvation of my soul. I now reflect with horror on the terrible condition in which I should have then encountered death and eternity, and the divine tribunal.

But

But that God, for whom, ungrateful as I was, I had no place in my remembrance, and whom (while I accumulated sin upon sin, abused my chief privileges, and rashly wronged my conscience) I basely neglected and affronted, had pity on me according to the riches of his free and unsearchable love, in which he had written me in the book of life. My bilious fever left me, and a common intermittent succeeded, which permitted me both to read and write. I was employed at this time, for exercise sake, in composing an oration on the Duty of Man and the Way to Happiness, and during this occupation felt my mind affected with some serious thoughts and purposes.

poses. In this state of mind I continued, if I mistake not, some days, designing to amend my conduct, but as health increased, my pious meditations and purposes, now ready to depart, decreased continually.

I had now a kind of contest with my parents. Their wish was to dedicate me to the ministry of the gospel, to which hitherto I had, myself, no objection. But at this time I felt an aversion to the study of theology, and little or no desire of the sacred function. I avowed plainly my want of inclination to theological pursuits, and that I could not look forward with any complacence to the ministerial office;

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in which determination I was confirmed by a belief that Miss E... would on account of it, more readily return my passion. Yet even these desires of mine yielded to parental authority. Returning to the university I gave all my attention to the Oriental languages and to philosophy, but chiefly to the latter. The distemper under which I had laboured, seemed to have benefitted both my talents and my judgment; at least I made a more rapid progress than before. Metaphysical and mathematical studies pleased me most, and I gave myself to them with great fervour. Both in private and in public I disputed with much applause, and in a private society particularly,

ricularly, where we read dissertations on various subjects, was numbered among the principal members. Praise was offered to me on every side, and, elate with vanity, I was foolish enough to think that I deserved it. My heart was insufferably proud. Fame and the applause of man seemed to me above all things desirable, and I resolved firmly that I would spare no pains to acquire them.

The end of this year approaching, I came, as I thought, to a fixt resolution to renounce theology; nothing, as it seemed to me, could possibly deter me from this purpose. Nevertheless I could not persuade my parents

rents to relinquish their intentions and to favour my wishes. Promises alike and threats were employed, and no means omitted that might shake my resolution. At length, therefore, I yielded, and, though reluctant, determined to comply. Ah, how unhappy had it been for me, had God granted me my wish and inclined my parents to humour me! I had then deprived myself most surely of the honour and joy of preaching the gospel, which now I account infinitely preferable to all others. Thus did God lead me, blind as I was, by a way that I knew not.

At this time my criminal indulgences were as before. Always addicted to the same sins, I hardened myself in them more and more. During the following years I advanced diligently in my philosophical studies. I composed an academical dissertation and defended it, was first created bachelor, then master of arts and teacher of philosophy. A small dissertation of mine obtained the honour of being entered among the acts of the society of S. I afterwards published a small volume on and intended a second part, but many hindrances, after my conversion, interposed to prevent it. Thus were my pride of heart and extravagant ambition every day encreased, and
every

every day I proposed to myself the glory of some new enterprize in the literary way, that I might acquire the reputation of genius and learning, and be celebrated far and near. As to riches, I cared little about them. My summum bonum consisted altogether in the gratification of the most boundless ambition, and of my carnal appetites. But thanks be to God, who frustrated all my various attempts to make myself illustrious!

In the mean time my love of Miss E. . . . continued, though with occasional abatements, and sometimes seeming to cease altogether. Once or twice it happened that I even felt some inclination

clination to change the object of my love; but many obstacles always occurred, and my first passion presently revived.—Having resided some years in the university, I sent Miss E. . . . a declaration of love by letter, although she could not be ignorant that I loved her. She contrived to answer me, and to this effect; that she could take no step in an affair of that sort without the knowledge and consent of her parents, and that it would be in vain for me to expect any other answer. I had accustomed myself to think that there was hardly any doubt of the success of my addresses, but now seemed to myself, for no fault of mine, to have lost all hope. My pride was hurt and I
resented

resented the repulse. My passion became less fervent, and I flattered myself that it would soon be entirely extinguished. About the same time a certain Miss S. used to be much with us, to whom by degrees I began to apply myself with great assiduity and ardour. My miserable mind was agitated with a diversity of passions and purposes. I made known to her my love by letter. But she ordered a prudent and proper answer to be given me, that without the privity and leave of her parents she could not allow herself to deliberate a moment on any such proposal. By the good providence of God I considered this answer as a complete refusal, and now was the

condition of my idolatrous heart truly miserable. Inordinate passions tore it in pieces, and where to find comfort I was utterly ignorant. Miss S.... however went abroad, and I was soon cured of my new attachment.—Oh how much do I owe to the management and care of God's adorable providence! His goodness would not permit the gratification of my foolish wishes. How wretched had I been had it pleased him to further these last attempts of mine, and if my new passion had not been extinguished by the absence of its object!

This passion no sooner sprang in my breast than I came to a resolution to
change

change my studies, and to enter on any other profession rather than the ministry of the gospel. In a letter to Miss S. . . . I offered to make choice of whatsoever course of life would please her most. Again I assailed my parents, who sometimes seemed to falter in their purpose, but, in the end, adhered firmly to their original one, and would give no ear to the importunate solicitations with which I urged them. Times there were when I seemed ready to submit to any inconveniences rather than to undertake the ministry. Partly I was deterred by the knots and difficulties that belong to the doctrines of christianity, and partly by an aversion to that kind of

of life which I well knew it became a minister to lead.—But God was otherwise minded. Ignorant as I was of *him*, he yet knew *me*, and preserved me from numerous snares of Satan, as well as from the pernicious machinations of my own heart. After all, therefore, I determined to obey my parents, and from that time forth continued immoveable.

Thus did it please God by his providential care of me to make me happy in his own way, nor would he suffer me to shut the door myself, against my entrance into that office, which I now know with the utmost certainty to be
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the most pleasant and most honourable of all.

A short time after, I had an opportunity of seeing Miss E. . . . ; my interrupted passion soon revived, and she possessed herself easily again of affections that had been unjustly extinguished. It seemed to me that I should by no means interpret her aright, understanding the answer she had given me as a repulse. More than one who wished to espouse her, and had obtained the consent of her parents (a matter, which when I heard it, affected me with the most sensible grief and fear) she positively refused; whence with good reason I derived great encouragement.

couragement.—After some months, and almost a year before my conversion, it happened, by the good providence of God, that I went to spend some time in my native place, where, to my great joy, I found Miss E.... I now made an offer of my heart in person, and was happy to observe that it did not displease her. After several conversations, still, as ever, evincing a singular love and reverence of her parents, she assured me that she would not engage in matrimony till I should have first disclosed my attachment and made my proposals to them; neither would she refuse me her hand should the parents of us both prove favourable to my wishes. This assurance contented me, and

and I could not but commend the tenderness of her filial conduct. I was now elevated to the pinnacle of joy. I accounted myself completely happy, and my heart, alas! full of idolatry, looked for felicity to the creature, regarding lightly the Creator who is over all blessed for ever.

During all this time the power of sin was most prevalent in me. In appearance modest, but I was destitute of religion. I seldom went to church, and when I went was manifestly inattentive, sitting there as a spectator merely, and occupied with any trifle. My meditations there were vain and sinful; and I was often too impatient
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to stay till the sermon was ended. To such a height did my impiety rise, that I accounted it an honour and boasted of it among my friends, that I seldom made one in the congregation. I should have blushed to have been frequently seen there, or when there, to have been seen with a Bible, or any religious book, in my hand. But there was no great fear of either. I made no use of scripture but to oppose it, or to consult it perhaps in the course of my studies; much less had I any inclination to explore the contents of other books of practical divinity. I had not therefore even the appearance of religion, and though externally I
seemed

seemed entitled to the praise of much decency, in my heart I cherished all manner of depravity and malice, which I suffered, not seldom, to break forth in private. Still was I addicted to the sins that I have mentioned above, which, had I at any time been detected in them, would have reduced me, ambitious as I was of praise, to the lowest degree of shame and desperation. Among my scanty remnants of virtue (if any virtue I had) I still possessed a compassionate and beneficent disposition. I could not think much of any man oppressed with want and misery, without grief and painful sympathy. If the poor applied to me

for relief, I assisted them willingly and gladly, and had sometimes a lively and grateful sense of my privilege. Yet even on such occasions I adverted not to the commandment of God, nor proposed to myself his glory as my object, but obeyed merely the dictates of natural instinct and sensibility. At the same time, I was not only insufferably proud, but my heart was full of hatred and envy, and as vindictive as malice could make it. Tendencies such as these could hardly have failed to betray me into open and public crimes, had not God, whom I neither knew nor honoured, by singular means preserved and restrained me. Occasion-

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ally I felt some strokes and gnawings of conscience, but they were neither effectual nor lasting. My flesh would not be subject to the law of God, neither indeed could be.

Your's ever,

CHRISTODULUS.

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that indeed could be

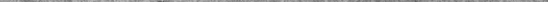
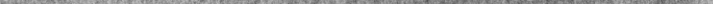
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LETTER III.

MY DEAREST BROTHER,

FROM the time of my first acquaintance with the university I had doubted the truth and divine origin of the christian religion. I hated the chosen people and the ministers of God. Frequently I spoke to others in scoffing and contemptuous terms of the Methodists so called, and of all who

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professed to be under the conduct of the Holy Spirit. My mother, in many letters which I received from her, exhorted me earnestly to sincere conversion and continual prayer. On these occasions the intolerable pride and extreme enmity of my heart, against God and all true religion, would manifest itself. With difficulty it was that I could prevail with myself even to read her letters. Doubts of all kinds concerning scripture-verity were welcome to me, and I cherished them. In my disputations at college I often spoke of the Bible most irreverently, and not seldom (alas! I blush at the recollection) sought to display my wit by jesting with it. It cost me no shame

at all to appear before my friends in the character of an enemy to revealed religion; on the contrary, I seized with avidity every opportunity of moving a doubt concerning either the facts or doctrines of the word of God. To my friends I was accustomed to read essays and dissertations that I had composed with express purpose to impugn and expose to ridicule, both the authority of scripture and the narratives of the sacred writers. Some fragments of my performances in that way are still in my custody, which serve me as unequivocal memorials of my former impiety, and afford me ample matter as well of humiliation and shame, as of praise and glory.

which I desire to give to the unspeakable grace of God, who snatched me from such an abyfs of iniquity and woe, and conducted me to the greatest possible felicity. Sentiments which, I hope, those papers will never cease to suggest to me. Several of the most important doctrines, such as those of the sacred Trinity, original sin, and eternal punishment, the incarnation and atonement, and the operations of the Holy Spirit, were a stumbling-block to me, and foolishness. Almost constantly I felt myself inclined to deny and reject them, and sometimes, which was worse, to blaspheme them. Often I was a Deist, and, at times, a Socinian. Frequently too I wickedly sought

sought occasion to controvert those truths in company, and to render them suspected to my friends. My opinions about them seemed to myself so well-founded, that I was persuaded I should never change them. It was my purpose, though I should engage in the ministry, the moment I could find any other means of creditable subsistence, to apply for my dismissal, and make a public avowal of my principles. Moreover, if I err not, I now and then conceived a design, to write, in due time, against revelation, and to send abroad into the world my doubts concerning the authority of scripture. The pernicious works of Enicdenus, Voltaire, and others, were very hurt-

ful to me, and confirmed me not a little in my deistical notions. And certain it is that unless God had forbidden, and interposed by his grace to prevent it, I should in all probability have gone forth a declared enemy of revelation, at least of all true and spiritual religion. In the meantime I was accustomed frequently to pray at night on my bed, and in a phrase and manner perfectly opposite to my own opinions. Among other things I asked for conversion, using ordinarily these words—Draw me, Oh Lord! and I will run after thee, convert me and I shall be converted.—A singular instance of God's over-ruling power! My prayer evidently contradicted

dicted my own ideas and opinions, and I asked that which I neither believed possible nor desfrable. I prayed also for God's assistance that I might grow in talents and in wisdom, that my studies might prosper, that the projects, with which pride and ambition prompted me, might have good success, and that my love of Miss E. . . . might have consequences answerable to my wishes. Finally I prayed, that my parents, kindred, tutors and friends, might all be objects of the divine benediction. Sometimes, through sleepiness or other hindrances, my prayers were either sadly interrupted or altogether neglected, but it cost me little regret or solicitude.

While

While I prayed in this manner, it generally happened that my mind was extraordinarily agitated, and I experienced great emotion; nor can I doubt that I was occasionally much assisted by what are termed the common operations of the Holy Spirit. During these exercises, if I mistake not, I was wont to represent to myself the divine presence as a glorious light in heaven, like that of the sun, which light seemed visible to my imagination. My devotions of this kind were accompanied with great fervour, and even with a species of joy. Yet I have cause to believe that they were sometimes followed by a more daring and presumptuous commission of sin, for,

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(the duty once performed) I seemed to have acquired a right to sin at my ease, and without disturbance.

At this time I was sickly and debilitated; a sudden dread of death would occasionally torment me, especially in the evening and when I was alone. I often had a singular notion that death would be particularly unwelcome and terrible to me in the dusk of evening, or in the night, or even in a gloomy day, but that I could die willingly and gladly under a bright sun and a serene sky. These sudden alarms and terrors however produced no fruit. I neither know nor believe that at this time I had any thoughts at all of the necessity

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necessity of regeneration and faith in Christ. My meditations were unfrequent, and such were my religious affections; accordingly they were never effectual to beget in me an earnest desire of a new heart, or of recovering the lost favour of God. About three or four months, I think it was, before my conversion, that by reading the works of J. A. Turretinus I was much strengthened in my belief of God's existence, his perfections and providence, and in a considerable measure cured of my incredulity concerning the authority of scripture. With great pleasure and with a full assent to the truth of them, I studied his numerous dissertations, and was sometimes overwhelmed

whelmed with such a sense of the divine majesty and glory as to seem not far from the kingdom of God. From this time, I understood and confessed the authority and divinity of scripture and of the religion of Christ, yet, after all, I had to encounter with many doubts and difficulties. After some time, it happened, that meditating one evening on the useful suberviency of true philosophy to the christian faith, and, among other themes, on death and eternity; I was greatly troubled in mind and affected with a most lively sense of the infinite importance of those subjects, so as to be unable to refrain from tears; so vehement were my emotions. But my heart

heart was like the stony ground. The good seed could strike no root in it. Spiritual apprehension or sense of the divine glory and majesty, I had none ; for which reason these inward motions that I felt, soon ceased, and no more than those which I had formerly experienced, produced in me any serious thoughts on the necessity of conversion, and of faith in Christ. Engrossed entirely by earthly concerns and attentions, I lived a life of negligence and indifference for the most part concerning the state of my soul, and in those few moments when I experienced either serious thoughts or affections, had not a single idea that regeneration by the Spirit of God, and an immediate
appli-

application to Christ for union with him, could be at all necessary to my salvation. Sometimes I seriously meditated on God as the chief good, but could by no means comprehend how he should be so. I did not indeed deny this truth, having been taught by a variety of arguments to prove it; but my heart contradicted them all. I seemed to discover far greater delights and gratifications in earthly interests and pleasures, than either in God or in the worship of God. Spiritual communion with God and the fruition of him in Jesus Christ, were subjects of which I was utterly ignorant. It was no wonder therefore that I could not comprehend how God should

should be the chief good, and the enjoyment of him the perfection of salvation. I frequently observed that *communion with God* and the *enjoyment of him*, were expressions with which I could hardly connect an idea, at least no such idea as would in any measure explain to me, why, and for what reason, the enjoyment of God is to be preferred to all the pleasures of the world and to all enjoyment of the creature. To be acquainted with God, to love and to adore him, were duties which I considered as reasonable, indeed necessary, and worthy to be performed with much attention, but how the well-being of the soul could be so much concerned in them, how they should

should prove a source of such happiness and delight as the theologians, following the lead of scripture, declare, was far beyond my comprehension. Sometimes however, when in a clear night I saw the heavens spangled with stars, which I represented to myself as so many suns and worlds, I felt an ardent desire to be there, and goaded by extreme curiosity, imagined it a most desirable and delightful privilege, to spend an eternity in the contemplation of those systems. And could there but be a hope (which at that time appeared and still appears to me, not impossible) that after death the soul may be at liberty to visit and to make her remarks on that immense
variety

variety of worlds—then, indeed, I accounted a place in heaven a prize for which it became to contend with unremitting earnestness.

I had by this time embraced the christian religion, and made profession of it. But my belief of scripture was merely general; I had many doubts still left concerning a variety of doctrines of the last importance, such as the trinity, original sin, the incarnation and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, the operations of the Holy Spirit, &c. Sometimes the Calvinistic opinions pleased me most, and sometimes I inclined more to those of the Pelagians and even to Socinianism. To attain

to any settled persuasion was not in my power. In presence of such of my friends as I accounted truly pious—I was mute, but to others declared myself without reserve, and we endeavoured mutually to confirm each other in such pernicious errors as were most suited to our carnal wisdom.

A few months before my conversion I wrote a small dissertation on in which I seem to have expressed the sentiments of a mind seriously affected with a sense of the infinite importance of religion. It contains some phrases at which I have since much wondered. I consulted no books, but wrote rapidly my thoughts as they arose, so that I

still wonder by what means it happened that I stumbled on several ideas found there. Among other matters I reprehended and earnestly exhorted those who deny the effectual operations of the Holy Spirit; gravely expressing a wish that they may soon learn the reality of them from their own undoubted experience. Such was my wish for them, and, wretched creature that I was, I had neither the least knowledge or experience of that blessing myself, nor any care to acquire it.

During all this time the Lord rescued me occasionally from the most imminent dangers. One day, when I walked with Mr. L. on the ice, we had

had many narrow escapes—the Lord spared us. The next day Mr. L. going on the ice alone, fell into the water and was drowned. His deplorable death, when the news reached me, affected me with a variety of very sensible emotions, yet not proportioned to the occasion, or in fact of any use to me. To certain of my friends I observed *that Mr. L. had suddenly become much wiser than we; and that I should be heartily glad to know what he knew, &c.* Thus I remarked on the tragical occasion, and soon forgot it. Some time after, the ice breaking under me, I fell, myself, into the stream of a rapid river. The danger of a terrible death then threatened me indeed, chiefly on

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account

account of the swiftness of the current beneath, and there was no help at hand. Hopeless of escape I yet struggled, and, by the good providence of God, emerged. God preserved me, that thus wonderfully surviving, I might prove instrumental in the accomplishment of his great and gracious counsels.

At length, that I may bring this letter to a close, about two months before my conversion, I manifested my extreme enmity against the pious ministers of the gospel, against the elect people of God, and against the gospel itself, in an anonymous publication; not indeed with a design to do the
former

former any real mischief, but merely to make them ridiculous and to hold them up to the laughter of the world. Yet, such was the long-suffering compassion of God toward me, that at this very season he graciously screened me from the melancholy consequences of some violent quarrels in which I had involved myself, interposing by his kind providence to save me from such formidable effects of them, as, had they taken their course, would probably have given a different cast and complexion to my whole condition. Though I treated him as if with scorn, and, hardening my heart still more and more, provoked his vengeance by accumulated offences, he yet dealt graciously

ciously with me. He not only *spared* but *preserved* me; and in a short time with a mighty hand delivered me from the dominion of Satan, conducting me to the chief of all distinctions and of all pleasures, the honour and happiness of knowing and of loving him for ever, who is the fountain of all and of all manner of blessing, and exalted—oh to what a height! above all creatures.

I am ever Yours,

Sept. 1789.

CHRISTODULUS.

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LETTER IV.

MY DEAREST BROTHER,

NOW came the acceptable time.—My name was inserted from eternity in the list of theirs whom the Father gave to Jesus that he might save them, for whom he shed his most precious blood and obtained the spirit of faith and regeneration.—If I was left to myself, left to give so many proofs

proofs of the desperate depravity of my heart, and to sin against the greatest mercies and privileges, with such obduracy, it was merely and alone for this cause, that the glory of the absolute and free grace of God, and the unspeakable value and efficacy of the blood and spirit of Christ might be the more clearly manifested in my conversion and salvation, and might be to myself, and to others for my sake, a theme of everlasting praises.

When in the year 17.... the university vacation approached, I had no purpose to visit home, several literary occupations of some labour requiring my presence in college. But beyond
my

my expectation I learned that Miss E... was at that time in my father's neighbourhood, and, as it happened, I had a fair opportunity for the journey. After some hesitation, at length, in defiance of not a few inconveniences, I resolved to go. I was happy to find Miss E... in health and amiable as ever, and her affection for me neither changed, nor diminished. A most advantageous match had lately been proposed to her and she had refused it.—I saw and conversed with her daily, but had few opportunities of speaking with her in private. Now and then however such an occasion presenting itself, I consulted her concerning my acceptance, in about two

6 years,

years, of a cure that had been offered to me in the neighbourhood. The proposal pleased her, and she expressed herself well satisfied with the situation. Our views and purposes harmonized with each other, but the purpose of God was different, and, blessed be his name for ever! our purposes vanished like smoke, while his stood fast, and he performed all his pleasure.

Not many days after my arrival Miss E.... began by little and little to decline in her health. Her indisposition encreased rapidly, and she was soon confined to her bed. Immediately I felt myself agitated by many fears, and my hope almost daily diminished. You
may

may have felt perhaps, but you can never by words express, the degree of anguish that I suffered on this occasion. The thought of her death was to me altogether insupportable. It seemed impossible that I should survive her. Now, all my amusements and studies became disgusting. Even the writings of the ingenious Voltaire, which stood so high in my estimation, were of no use to relieve me from my miserable depression of spirits. When on occasion of my daily enquiries concerning Miss E.... I was informed either that she was no better, or that her distemper rather encreased, a sword seemed to pass through my heart; and harassed by inexpressible fears, what
I should

I should do I knew not. I prayed to my unknown God for the restoration of her health. Never, I think, shall I pray again with equal earnestness.— Yet, after all, her disease raged daily more and more, and in a short time the danger became imminent. My terrors and agitations of mind keeping pace with her illness, had by this time increased to such a degree, that it became necessary for me, lest I should fall into absolute desperation, to contrive some employment or other, by which, my distracted mind might in some measure be diverted to other objects. I determined to write a sermon, and with consent of the minister of the place, to deliver it in public.

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A few days before the appointed time of delivery, I proceeded thus—I chose my text—spent some days in meditation on it—wrote down my thoughts, and committed the whole to memory. Thus I had not much leisure to advert to other things. The violence of my distress was at least alleviated, and my attention directed elsewhere. At the time fixed I mounted the pulpit. The Lord did not suffer me, (as justly and deservedly I might have been, for my rashness and irreverence) to be put to shame. I preached with much applause, and possibly not without some effect. On this and the following day the distemper seemed very much abated and the health of Miss E.... so far restored

restored that I hoped in a short time to witness her complete recovery. My joy now was proportioned to the pangs I had suffered. I saw her, and with great pleasure, declared to her my former dread and anxiety on her account, as well as my present sincere delight in the assurance I seemed to have of her restoration. After this, while they were carrying her to her bed, she looked at me with eyes expressive of singular affection, full of the tenderest meaning, and fixt on me with an extraordinary seriousness of attention. From that time I was never permitted to see her. The joy that I had conceived proved transient as it had been sudden. The disease returned

ed on her with redoubled force, and raged to such a degree that her sufferings were extreme.—The next day, to the best of my remembrance, a physician of the first eminence was called in. Having seen her, he pronounced immediately her distemper most alarming, and so dangerous that he entertained very little hope of her recovery. These words sounded in my ears like a terrible clap of thunder. In truth, my condition was most unhappy, agitated as my mind was with extreme terror, and torn with unutterable grief. I laboured, but it was with the utmost difficulty that I prevailed, to conceal in some measure the fearful state of my mind.—In the mean time I had a hor-

rible prospect before me of being present at her death; a prospect that I could not bear to contemplate. I determined to leave her, and to depart suddenly from the place. Neither her condition nor the state of my own mind would allow me to bid her adieu. Accordingly, without her knowledge, overwhelmed with sorrow and dejection, I abandoned my home and returned to the university.

There I employed myself in searching diligently into the observations and experiments of a celebrated physician, if I mistake not, of the name of Dobson, among which I remembered formerly to have read an account

count of the distemper with which Miss E.... was afflicted. In a letter which I wrote immediately I entreated with the utmost earnestness that his prescriptions, however little in use in that country, might be tried. I then prayed with extraordinary affection that those remedies might have a happy effect, and that she, without whom life was impossible to myself, might be restored to health. Sorrow and love, combined, taught me to pray fervently. These supplications I offered in various manners, and urged them on various pleas, and sometimes flattered myself that the prescriptions would have the desired effect; which event I thought would more than any thing

thing recommend me to the parents of Miss E.... and insure their consent to our union.

On the third day after my arrival at college, news were brought me that Miss E.... was not worse, and that the prescriptions I had sent, would be used, if the physician had no objection. But some hours after, a friend of our family whom my parents (as I learned in the sequel) had entreated to the office, called on me with the fatal tidings. Employing his usual eloquence, he began with informing me that the medicines recommended by me would have no better effect than those prescribed by the phy-

physician. Then, telling me that he had observed my affection for Miss E...., he added, that there was very little hope of her recovery. I presently conceived a fear that all this was merely preparatory, and that I should soon receive from him the terrible news of her decease. I asked him with much quickness, if she were dead? He replied—She is. Just in this moment I kept myself under strong controul. My concern appeared not outwardly so vehement as was expected.—Secretly however I felt myself in a state of desperation, and, for some moments, my mind was so stunned as to have lost all power of reflection.

In order to abstract my thoughts a little from this great affliction, I walked forth and called on one friend and another. But my sorrow and weakness of mind were but little relieved by it. It seemed adviseable to me to take a short journey through the adjacent country, that my spirits, overwhelmed with distress, might receive some recreation. But the good providence of God would not suffer it. To such a degree did my despair sometimes prevail, that I seemed to myself to be rendered absolutely incapable of pursuing my studies, or of enjoying quiet and comfort more, so that I considered even life itself as an intolerable burthen. But God supported and pre-

preserved me, by his secret influence and direction.

I purchased some books, the fame of which had casually reached me, among which were Lavater's Prospect of Eternity, together with sermons by Walker, Blair, &c. The Prospect of Eternity by Lavater I read immediately. A little hope dwelt in me that after death I should meet Miss E.... again. A hope that sometimes supported and refreshed me. For that reason I searched diligently the writings of Lavater for arguments favourable to the opinion that we shall know each other in a future life, and that the relations which obtain between us

here will not entirely cease hereafter. At the same time I prayed to God that he would mitigate and do away the excessive sorrow with which I was tormented. But not one thought had I of faith in Christ and conversion.

At this time I employed myself in assisting a friend of mine who was preparing a book that he had written, for publication, and found, while thus occupied, my attention somewhat diverted from my loss, and the stress of my sorrow abated. About eight days, to the best of my remembrance, after the death of Miss E.... my paroxysms of grief and imbecillity of mind were vehement to the last degree. I was
torn

torn in pieces by despair, had neither hope nor courage left—Oppressed with insupportable sorrow I threw myself on the bed, wishing nothing so much as, by a sudden stroke, to be released from a life grown hateful to me. Alas! how miserable had I been to eternity, had my rash and unreasonable wish been granted! After some hours my mind became a little calmer.

I had now begun to read the meditations of a certain Socinian, or rather Sceptic, on the principal truths of natural religion—the elegant simplicity of his style pleased me exceedingly. My sorrowful spirit at this time inclined me more to the reading of religious books than

than of any.—I fought, in good earnest, for some alleviation of a grief which I knew not how to bear, and of which I could not hope that it would ever cease entirely; but to attain to it by the aid of my customary studies, or by any amusements whatever, was not in my power. Lavater's Prospect above-mentioned in some degree engaged my attention, strengthened my mind, and for a time enabled me to forget my sorrow. My chief concern and the subject of all my prayers and endeavours, was an abatement of my excessive grief, but as for the salvation of my soul I thought no more of it, perhaps less, than formerly. Not a single idea occurred to me of the necessity

cessity of a new birth and of union with Christ by faith. Spiritual good, was a good of which I had neither the knowledge nor the desire. My prayers therefore and my search into the contents of religious books had all one tendency, and aimed at nothing more than my deliverance from the extremity of woe, and the recovery, if possible, of some tranquillity.

The very next day, if I mistake not, was the day which I am bound never to forget, but to celebrate with eternal praises; the day in which by the omnipotent grace of God I was called out of darkness into light, out of death into life, and was made partaker of

the heavenly birth. I fought not the Lord but was found by him; little did I think of him, but he *loved me with an everlasting love, and in loving-kindness drew me to himself*. I was given to Christ from eternity. He had bought me with his precious blood; hitherto I had been a wandering sheep straying here and there, but now was the time come when I should be converted to the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and brought into his blessed flock.

In the afternoon I was employed in reading the meditations which I have mentioned of that Socinianizing or sceptical writer on the truths
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of natural religion. I read him with a close attention, and was absorbed in the meditations that he suggested. Suddenly awakened, as I may say, out of those musings, I thought on God and his works. An idea altogether extraordinary of the glory and majesty of God struck me. I had never in such manner represented God to myself as now. I observed (the eyes of my understanding being enlightened) and admired in all his works to which I adverted, his stupendous power, wisdom and goodness. I had in my mind an apprehension of the splendor of his glory and presence perfectly new to me. It was not so much a *notion* that my illuminated intellect

intellect entertained of his infinite majesty and perfections, as it was a *sense* of them; they were so present to me that I *felt* them. The glory of his infinite godhead and presence filled me with delight, and I saw so clearly his supreme worthiness of all my love and obedience, that my mind was carried by a sweet and irresistible force to love him with sincerity, and my heart, broken at the sight, abhorred its former ingratitude. I instantly conceived the purpose of a total reform in my conduct, of an universal attention to all his commandments, and to take them for my rule of life thenceforth without any exception. This appeared to me not only perfectly just and right,

right, but easy also and pleasant. I seemed to myself to have been hitherto the blindest and most ungrateful of creatures, who had never formed to myself such views of God before, who had neither loved nor obeyed him.

And now I recollected that I had a difference with two who had been once my friends. My anger against them had been extreme. The pride and thirst of revenge with which I had been usually animated, seemed to render a prompt reconciliation highly improbable; but, at this time, I saw it evidently my duty to use my utmost endeavours to effect it. That new apprehension of God and sense of his greatness

greatness with which my mind was now penetrated, wrought in me an unfeigned love to all mankind, and excited and compelled me by a force which it was happiness to obey, to exercise towards all alike a spirit of gentleness and benevolence. That very evening I had an opportunity to see them both at the house of a third person. Gladly I went, and as I went, was occupied, to my best remembrance, all the way in meditations on the glory of God exhibited in every creature: I showed myself affable and friendly to my enemies, and behaved to them as if no strife whatever had occurred between us. A few days after, I wrote to them declaring that I had renounced

renounced all enmity and anger against them, and was most ready to renew our friendship.

From this memorable day my condition became widely different, and my course of life also. With a degree of attention to which I had till then been a stranger, I contemplated the great works of God, especially the structure of the human body, and in particular my own. The many proofs that I discovered of the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, affected me with rapturous admiration and astonishment. In the liveliest manner I saw and perceived in all his works the unspeakable majesty and consummate

righteousness of God, and how pleasant it is incessantly to admire, adore, love, and with the utmost readiness to serve him. I had evidently acquired other and new ideas of God, of myself, of the vanity of earthly things, and of the inestimable value of grace and divine communion. I was translated, as it were, into a new world. Christ lived in me, although till then I had not known him, and thus I became a new creature; old things had passed away and all things were become new. In short, it is easier to conceive than to express what passed in my mind on this occasion.

These

These things had not happened many days when reflecting seriously on what had befallen me, I perceived that a great and amazing change had been wrought in me; that my mind was illuminated by a light that I had never seen before, and that my wishes and desires were become new also. Taught therefore by undoubted experience I hence concluded that I had obtained by the incomprehensible and effectual grace of God, that new birth without which no man can see or enter the kingdom of God, and of which, formerly, I had neither the desire nor even the thought. My ideas, now, of the infinite excellence and loveliness of God were lively and perspicuous. Such also were my ap-

prehenſions of my duty toward him, of my own exceſſive ingratitude and diſobedience, and of God's powerful and unmerited grace by which he had quickened me! Fears of the divine wrath I had none; no dread of puniſhment. That I deſerved it indeed, and was utterly unworthy of his favour, I ſaw plainly, notwithſtanding which I never for a moment ſuppoſed myſelf an object of divine wrath, or feared leſt I ſhould ſuffer the puniſhment that I had deſerved. It was a ſubject on which anxiety, fear, doubt, had no place in me. A lively perception of the divine glory and beauty, an unſpeakable ſenſe of his gracious preſence, an experimental acquaintance with

with the delight that belongs to an effectual love of him—those things secured me from all such terrors, and filled me with exceeding joy. In such a state of mind I could not doubt one moment concerning my admittance to the divine favour and communion, for I had sensible experience of both; knowing myself, however, at the same time unworthy of them, and unable to account for the grant of them to me, otherwise than in virtue of the blood and spirit of Christ alone, the Son of God, and only Saviour of sinners.

About this time I enquired of my mother by letter in what manner Miss E. . . . had died, respecting a due con-

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cern for the welfare of her own soul. She returned me for answer that she believed there was *some good thing found in her toward the Lord God of Israel*, for that she had expressed great solicitude on that subject, and that she had herself set before her the imputed righteousness of Christ, as the sole ground of a sinner's justification and salvation, on which alone he could rest safely, and implore, with hope of success, the favour of a righteous God. Having read this letter, I was not perfectly satisfied with the manner in which my mother had addressed her, and took it rather amiss that she had proposed to her as the proper ground of hope the vicarious sufferings and righteousness of Christ.

Christ. These had hitherto been to me a stone of offence and foolishness. I had not indeed for some time made a public avowal of unbelief, nor was I any longer a reviler of christianity. Against some of my friends I seriously defended the doctrine of the Trinity as well as several others. Immediately after the great change of heart that I had undergone, the temerity and wanton boldness of my genius had suffered a considerable abatement. But certain it is that I had as yet no spiritual knowledge of many truths the most important. The supernatural illumination of the mind, regeneration and the change consequent upon it—these I knew by clear and sure experience ;

but my views of the Lord Jesus were still very obscure. The knowledge which I had received of him from men and books availed me not. I had read much concerning him in the course of my studies, much also concerning his person, natures, characters, offices and benefits I could have cited from systems of divinity. But of all this I had no spiritual knowledge, though it now behoved me much to acquire it. In the days that immediately followed my regeneration, I thought not much of Jesus, and if any ideas of him presented themselves to my soul they were deeply tinctured with the opinions either of the Arians or Socinians. Just notions of his divinity, of the satisfaction

faction made by him, and of the life of faith in him I had none; but on these subjects roved at random. What I ought to believe of him I knew not; and though he had purchased for me, and bestowed on me, the grace and favour of God, adverted seldom or never to my infinite obligation to him. The Saviour dwelt in me, as I may say, unknown to me, and held my eyes that I might not know him yet; although I was made partaker of his life, and as a member of his mystical body derived from him as from the head of that body, however unconscious of it, all the illumination, comfort, or spiritual strength that I enjoyed.

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In the mean time my concern for the death of Miss E.... abated much, and the extreme grief that I had suffered was almost entirely done away. My mind was now altogether engaged in other matters. Cheerfully I both hoped and prayed in due time to see what advantages had resulted to me from that loss, and how well and wisely the Lord had appointed me to suffer it; and in measure as I considered the importance of eternal things, the worth of the soul, and the happy change that I had experienced—I could, with my whole heart, give thanks to God for that very event, which only a few days before, had filled me with insupportable anguish,

guish, and driven me almost to the extremity of desperation.

Not many days after that remarkable change, I wrote to a friend of mine who had been a witness of my sorrow and despair, informing him of my extraordinary conversion; that I had begun to entertain far other thoughts of God and religion than formerly, that my grief occasioned by the death of Miss E.... was much moderated, and in fact had almost ceased. In reality this sudden and effectual change was such, that from the moment when it befel me I could never doubt for a single hour my vocation, at that time, from death to life, and from darkness into

into marvellous light. Thus did God in a wonderful manner hear my prayers for an alleviation of my affliction, and thus did he fulfil them by means of which I had no conception.

Permit me here to add two or three remarks on the singular management of God's providence in this dispensation.

Had I not seen and conversed with Miss E. . . . a few days before her death, I had been less afflicted at it. Yet my journey home was unexpected, and made in spite of many difficulties. I did see and converse with her, and found

found her faithful to me. These circumstances augmented my sorrow.

Had I continued at home and been present at her death, the affliction would have entirely overpowered me, the books that I have mentioned would have excited in me no curiosity to read them, neither should I have been capable of it.

Had I travelled into the country as I intended, the sorrow that urged me to read, meditate and pray, would probably soon have lost much of its emphasis.

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Had my grief been more intense than it was, it had become downright desperation, and had it been less intense, my ordinary studies, various amusements, and conversation with my friends, would have delivered me in a short time from the greater part of it.

Wonderful therefore were the means by which I was impelled to the purchase of the books I have mentioned, the notice of which books reached me also by accident exactly in that crisis.

But more wonderful still it seems, that it should have pleased God, whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, who
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is great and we comprehend him not, to give me the light of his own Spirit, to snatch me from the kingdom of Satan, and translate me into his own glorious kingdom, while I was reading a book which, under a christian title, contains much unchristian matter, and in which the divinity and satisfaction of Christ are both controverted ! This was unquestionably an extraordinary measure. These beginnings of my regeneration differ in truth widely from the experience of most. Oh what abundant matter have I of continual admiration, adoration, and thankful obedience ! But alas, how little do I render in return for the unspeakable
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obligation! Help me, my friend! to
praise God in the highest, and to cele-
brate his grace and glory.

I am sincerely,

And most affectionately your's,

CHRISTOPHER.

LET.

LETTER V.

REVEREND AND DEAREST BROTHER!

MY heart had undergone a great change, and it manifested itself clearly in my manners and practice.

My pride and inordinate ambition were much lowered; I could no longer justify or cherish the least degree of hatred or malice against any; in many respects

respects I saw plainly the emptiness of all human things, the trivial value of all earthly good, and the excellence of virtue and piety. My heart now expanded itself for the reception of invisible things—things mentally perceived, and I burned with an insatiable desire of knowing and enjoying God. Yet with all this I remember to have entertained certain ideas and machinations of heart, such as prove that at this very time, though there were numerous earthly objects about which I felt no solicitude, there were nevertheless many to which I still cleaved closely, so as even to imagine the enjoyment of them desirable in the highest degree, and that I could not be
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happy without them; for which reasons I incessantly prayed to God for them.

Among other things, my empty ambition which had formerly accounted nothing too great to be enterprized for my own glory, though it was much weakened, was evidently not yet extirpated. I sometimes gave myself with much application, to mathematical and other studies, none of which promised to prove at all subservient to my principal purpose, which was to advance myself in the spiritual life, and to acquire knowledge and gifts suited to the work of the ministry. Without the least serious deliberation or concern, I did many things for which

I now cannot imagine it possible that I could have any other motive, than merely to acquire the praise and the applause of men. My heart was extremely sensible to the allurements of human glory and to the eulogics of the learned, and alas! I would that it were not proper for me to add—such it is still—though at present I dare not venture on such means of acquiring them, as at that time I employed without scruple.

In the mean time I studied divinity closely and with better effect than before. Not many days after my conversion, I began to keep a journal of all my doings and experiences. Part of

it is lost, and was lost soon after I began the practice, and being obliged to quit U.... suddenly, for some time I discontinued it.

I now attended the public ordinances with great fervour and delight, and was favoured in them frequently with a singular sense of God's gracious presence, with much consolation, and with encouragements to the exercise of all virtue. I now never left the church, before the service was ended, though sometimes I was obliged to stand during the whole of it; willingly submitting to any inconvenience so that I might but hear, and understand the sermon.

Every morning and evening I made supplication to God and gave thanks for his benefits conferred on me; and was often excited at other seasons also, by overflowing affections and pious sentiments, to lift my heart to God and to pour it out in prayer before him. I bound myself to no certain form, but presented to God the desires of my heart, and my aspirations of gratitude, in the order in which they occurred and were excited in me. Frequently on these occasions I had the deepest sensible experience and proof, that it was good for me to draw nigh unto God. I now began to read the scripture diligently and in a manner far different from that to which I had been

been accustomed; enjoying not seldom while I read it the most delightful and precious consolations. At the same time, I continued to read the tract above-mentioned on natural and revealed religion. I read also Walker's sermons and Blair's, not without profit and a sense of the divine blessing. While I was occupied in reading and considering the truths of God, even my body would be remarkably affected by the affections, and enjoyments of my mind. My bosom seemed dilated as with the warmth of a gentle fire, which diffused through my whole frame the most agreeable sensations. In truth, there was a wonderful intercourse between soul and body. As often as in

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the scripture, or in the books that I have named, I found mention made of Jesus and meditated on him, on his life, his sufferings and his righteousness, or on the privilege of union with him, I perceived my mind affected with sensible consolation and delight; yet was it not illuminated on these subjects, but rather much beclouded.

By turns I represented him to myself as mere man in the first instance, then deified—by turns, as one created before the foundations of the world were laid, and the most excellent of all creatures; and, by turns, as a divine person. Thus was I every day drawn to a different opinion of him. Sometimes I considered his sufferings and death

death as a true and proper atonement of sin. Then, suddenly it would appear to me most probable that Jesus was merely a teacher and exemplar of virtue, and that he died only to confirm the truth of his heavenly doctrine. I remember occasionally to have felt a lively sense of gratitude accompanying the contemplation of his free love, and of that self-denying spirit in which he descended from heaven to earth, voluntarily exposing himself to such misery, to so many and great sufferings and to a death so dreadful, that he might instruct mankind and lead them to true holiness; regardless at what expence it were effected, so that he might but save them eternally.

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Many doubts I also cherished concerning predestination, transmissive guilt, and other truths of scripture. With respect to myself indeed, I understood feelingly and acknowledged, my unworthiness and the ingratitude of my heart and life, who had despised and pursued with hostility the most glorious and lovely of all beings, whose majesty is proclaimed by all his creatures. Yet with many evils of my heart I was not yet duly acquainted, neither knew I my own natural depravity, my enmity against God, and my perfect insufficiency for all spiritual good. These doubts of mine would at times affect me with an anxious solicitude, and the more, because I was
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in a state of preparation for the ministry. I was attached however to no party. The grace of God held me indifferent on which side truth lay, so that I might but find it, and my resolution was most firmly taken to believe the truth in whatsoever form it might appear to me. I humbly implored God to teach me the truth, confiding in his promises and pleading them fervently before him. I prayed to Jesus also, if I mistake not, that he would himself instruct me how I ought to think of his person and the work that he had accomplished. Truth was my chief desire. I distrusted my own understanding. To God I applied for illumination and wisdom, determining without

without hesitation to attach myself immovably to the truth when once known, and to profess it openly.

I esteemed it a sacred necessity and a matter of conscience, should I be convinced of the truth either of the Arminian or Socinian doctrines, to embrace them, and renounce the Calvinistic church immediately. I foresaw indeed a thousand difficulties—the tears of my parents and relations, entreaties, threats, persecutions, scorn, and perhaps penury. But God, by his effectual grace, made me ready to renounce all considerations of present interest, and to encounter, I cared not what evils, for his truth's sake and for the glory of his name. Accordingly, after few weeks,

as I shall presently relate, I was taught by sure experience that it is not in vain to ask of God wisdom, but that he will direct our goings, if we acknowledge him in all our ways.

In the mean time I experienced none of those terrors and doubts with which the faithful are usually tormented in the beginning of their conversion, and which cease not till they have acquired a more spiritual acquaintance with Christ, and are sensible that they cleave to him, and are united with him. I never for a moment trembled at the wrath of God, or had any anxious thoughts of condemnation and eternal misery. I never doubted one moment

of my being made partaker of the grace of God, an heir of everlasting salvation, that I was regenerated by a divine power, and that the principle of a spiritual life was imparted to me. I well knew indeed that I was unworthy of the grace and favour of God, yet could by no means question my interest in them, while God continually showed to me a countenance of paternal kindness and affection, overwhelming my soul with delight and with the sweetest sense of his gracious presence, as often as I employed myself in adoring him, and in contemplating and admiring the grandeur of his works. I lamented my sins and felt a sincere sorrow on their account, but it was

was so tempered by a lively sense of the divine presence and favour, that it was pleasant, if I may be allowed to say so, to mourn as I did. I knew with unquestionable certainty, by infallible feeling and experience, that I had attained to the favour of God and to communion with him, and that I had been raised to newness of life; and I knew likewise that I was altogether unworthy of those benefits. But how, and in what way, or on what ground such great salvation had been procured for me and afforded to me, I was as yet perfectly ignorant. In my divinity-studies I had indeed acquired some knowledge of Jesus, of his satisfaction, work and offices, yet beside that I not
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unfrequently called these most important truths respecting him into question, the knowledge I had of them, such as it was, was merely superficial, natural, human. A spiritual apprehension of them was what I wanted; and had it pleased God to withhold from me those sensible consolations, to deprive me of a sense of his gracious presence, and to hide his face from me, without all question I had also had my terrors, my anguish and my doubts, having no truly spiritual views of Jesus, or confidence in his blood and righteousness.—But the divine wisdom took a different course. I was for a time permitted constantly to behold the face of God as that of a gracious Father.

Father. - As often as the day returned, in my prayers, thanksgivings, contemplations and meditations on the works of God and on his infinite glory, I was filled with heavenly joy and with the sweetest intimations of his presence. Thus therefore, under an affecting sense of his kindness and indulged in the blessedness of communion with him, it was not possible that I should suffer fear or dread, or that I should doubt my eternal salvation, feeling as I did so sensibly the very principles of it within me.

Every day I fervently and joyfully endeavoured to contemplate God's works both of creation and providence.

dence. With a spirit elevated to the highest admiration of their Maker, I meditated on the sun, the moon, the planets, the comets, the fixed stars, meteors, fossils, plants, animals, man. With supreme amazement I considered my own body and soul, and their union and intercourse, altogether mysterious and inexplicable. Wheresoever I turned my view, whether to heaven, to earth, or to myself, struck with unspeakable wonder, I saw, I felt the incomprehensible God, infinite in majesty, and oh to what a height exalted above the praise of all his creatures !

Every day I attempted to represent to myself by the force of imagination,

gination, in a lively manner, this globe of earth, its vast bulk and superficies, suspended with its atmosphere in æther, revolving at once around the sun and its own axis, by the sun enlightened and warmed, and surrounded by that wonderful element the air; containing upon its surface, seas, mountains, valleys, rivers, &c. in which are found millions of animate and inanimate, rational and irrational creatures. Then, calling my attention and imagination home, I endeavoured to impress my mind with an idea of myself, as a skeleton clothed with muscles and nerves, furnished with exquisite sensitive organs, with a multiplicity of implements artfully constructed

and adapted to many admirable uses, and in which *skeleton* resides, as I may say, *this self*, that is my reasonable soul, connected with it by a bond of union unintelligible to me. All these contemplations excited in me lively perceptions of God's power, wisdom and goodness; and thus occupied, I felt a pure and heavenly delight diffusing itself through all my faculties, and was happy in the enjoyment of the presence of God. And the more I saw of the glory of God, and the more I admired him, so much the more my heart panted after every virtue and abhorred its contrary evil.—I wrote a short summary of rules by which I purposed to conduct myself. Their
princi-

principal drift was, resistance to all carnal desires, pride, anger, thirst of revenge, and love of the world. These I read over daily, and almost always with pious emotion and with advantage.

These contemplations on my own soul and body have seemed to me to carry such conviction with them, that I sometimes, though not wisely, thought them sufficient of themselves, if rightly managed, for the conversion of any man. Purposing to confirm my opinion by experiment, I communicated to some of my friends an account of the extraordinary delight I had found in them, advising them at the same time to do as I had done, to con-

sider themselves with a fixed attention, as skeletons furnished with muscles and nerves, subsisting and living by an effect of wonderful contrivance, and united as wonderfully with a living soul, &c. But my hope was disappointed; I found not the desired fruit of my endeavour. I had nevertheless great pleasure in conversing with my friends on the marvellous works of God, and sought all occasions of doing it.

I had not as yet conversed familiarly with any of the people of God. I knew not the state and the experiences of others; and others were ignorant of mine. The will of God thus wisely ordered for me. I could hardly have
endured

endured those whose feelings had not tallied with my own, nor would they have easily endured me, or received me into their communion.

• Some weeks after my conversion, I had a fair opportunity of advancement to a certain office in the university, but with no hesitation I rejected the proposal made to me, declaring warmly that I saw so much pleasure and honour attending the work of the ministry, that I preferred it infinitely to all other employments, and that nothing should move me to renounce it.

Soon after this, a heavy and most unexpected calamity befel our family.

I had a presage of it, though there appeared no reason to apprehend it. I humbly entreated the Lord that he would either avert the evil or give me unshaken fortitude and patience to bear it. I had promised a friend of mine to visit and preach for him, and had begun a sermon on the necessity of sanctification, though such a sermon as I should now, with just cause, in many respects disapprove. On the very day when I finished it, in my morning meditations and prayers to God I found singular delight and encouragement, and was favoured with an extraordinary prelibation of the joys above. In the evening, when having put the last hand to my sermon

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mon I was employed in reading it, the fatal messenger arrived, who brought me news of such dreadful calamity, as threatened all our house with poverty and dishonour. Now I perceived for what reason it was that I had been this day indulged with such remarkable consolations. God wonderfully strengthened me, and I received the tidings with a mind calm and tranquil.

On the day following I went home, where I found the family immersed in the deepest misery and sorrow. Each shed tears abundantly; I alone was able to restrain them. A few weeks before, it would have cost me all my fortitude to have supported such an affliction, and all mine would have been

been perhaps too little. But a sense of God's presence and love enabled me now, not only to bear it quietly, but even to be thankful for it. The power of religion so tempered my sorrow that I acquiesced gladly in the dispensation, and even promised myself much benefit from it. Neither have I been disappointed. In the first place, this misfortune smoothed for me the way in which I have been led to a greater distance from earthly things, and have been prompted to endeavour mainly my own furtherance in the spiritual life, and the edification of others ; secondly, it prepared me for a manifestation of the glory and the offices of Jesus, of which to this moment I was
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ignorant; and thirdly, it tended to the execution of God's wonderful purpose, that I, who had never proposed to myself any such measure, should quit my country to dwell where I now dwell—that I should preach here the gospel, and feed the flock, of Jesus.

A friend offered me a house which for some time I inhabited. I now intended to repair thither immediately for the purpose of ordination, that being admitted to the ministry I might have an employment and be enabled to maintain myself and to assist my distressed relations. Not many days after, I received a letter from Dr., whom I hardly knew, in which he invited

vited me to a cure at P...., telling me at the same time that I must take my resolution speedily, and answer him without delay. Having read his letter I felt no inclination to accept the offer, on account of the remote situation of that city, and for other reasons. Neither could I deliberate on the matter in so short a time as was allowed me, and in my answer so I told him. He replied therefore, that I might take some time to consider of it..

I could hardly endure the thought of quitting my own country, chiefly because I had never yet been able to relinquish my ambitious projects, to the execution of which the place in question seemed

seemed little favorable. On the other hand, I considered that it would be almost impossible, if not altogether so, that I should be able to live creditably in my native place, and especially to assist my family. As to the rest, I saw plainly enough, that in any place, I might be instrumental to enlarge the kingdom of Christ, and might direct immortal souls to him for salvation. I laid these things deliberately before God and before my friends, prepared to obey with humility the will and direction of providence. At length this measure seemed to recommend itself to me most, and I signified to Dr. that I would accept the offer.

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In the mean time my heart teemed with a multiplicity of inventions concerning my future studies, and endeavours after a distinguished reputation. For to renounce those endeavours and studies, however little they promised to further my principal views, had never yet made any part of my intentions. In a short time I learned from Dr. that impediments had occurred, so that after all, the proposal made to me might possibly come to nothing. The grace of God, however, so ordered it that I was able with a tranquil mind to resign myself to his disposal, hoping and trusting that he would kindly lead me by his providence, and in his own time

time direct me to some place, in which, I might best answer my own desire, and his glorious purpose in the service of the gospel.

My journey undertaken with a view to future ordination, proved a dangerous one, in which God by a singular interposition preserved me from imminent perils, and brought me safe home again.

I now prepared myself by close study for my future examination, and at intervals read Hervey's Theron and Aspasio. In the mean time Satan was not idle, but vehemently excited, as occasion offered, my sinful desires, leading

leading me into such grievous temptations as would have cost me a dreadful fall, had not God by his especial care preserved me. By the last-mentioned book it pleased God to teach me the truths of the gospel. My desires to know the truth were sincere, and it was the matter of my continual supplications. They were now granted. I was now completely convinced of Christ's divinity and atonement, of his vicarious righteousness as the only ground of reconciliation, and of all other doctrines with which these are necessarily connected. In the light of the Holy Spirit I saw that I was freely chosen of God from eternity, and given to Jesus for salvation. That he had suffered

suffered in my stead the punishment due to my sins, and for me had fulfilled the whole law, and that I was indebted solely to his active and passive obedience for all my title to happiness—that these alone were the meritorious cause, the only ground on which my sins could be forgiven, and myself admitted into the favour of God, and communion with him. Now I saw by what means it had been brought to pass that my heart had been so wonderfully changed, and eternal life begun in me; I saw that I owed it all to Christ who had shed for me his most precious blood, and, by giving me of his own Spirit, had kindled in me that new life which he had purchased for

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me by the sacrifice of himself. I had already been made sensible of the divine favour, and had enjoyed communion with God; now I understood why, and on what foundation; understood that, through Christ, I was become supremely and unalterably happy, and that my happiness was perfectly consistent with all the divine attributes, so that the just, holy, wise, and infinitely gracious God could be glorified in my salvation.

My faith and hope now stood on firmer ground. I now drew my comfort and confidence not merely from a sense of God's favorable presence, but learned to derive them primarily

fly from the consideration of the work which Christ had finished on the cross, and (by virtue of spiritual union with him) out of his fullness. I learned also to account all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour, desiring to glory only in his cross. Now I adored Christ as God over all, and accounted him altogether worthy of all my love and obedience, since to him alone I am a debtor for deliverance from so great a death, and for the attainment of such great salvation, purchased for me by the voluntary submission of an incarnate God to the most dreadful sufferings, terminated by a death the most ignominious and cruel.

In a short time I received my first ordination, trusting that God in his own time would find a fit place for me, in which I might minister the gospel, and be profitable to immortal souls.

I am most sincerely your's,

Os. 1789.

CHRISTODULUS.

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LETTER VI.

REVEREND AND DEAREST BROTHER,

THOUGH I had now attained to some spiritual knowledge of God in Christ, and of myself, I had yet many things to learn, that I might live more for Christ and to the honour of God, and be duely prepared for my most important office as a feeder of the flock of Jesus. I was at present furnished

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nished with but very scanty apprehensions of my extreme corruption of nature, and unworthiness. I little knew what it is to live daily, through Christ, a life of faith, in all circumstances and at all times to avail myself of his fullness—What it is to seek the honour of God above all things, and, whatsoever is done, to do all to his glory. I had as yet learned little by experience of the unsearchable love of Christ, little of the stupendous display and harmonious concurrence of all the perfections of God in the whole work of redemption. I little thought of the glory of God in his government of the world, and how the fates of nations and of individuals are all ordered with a refer-

rence to the interests of his Church. Neither had I any just conceptions of what spiritual affliction means, or of my own consummate weakness, and perpetual propensity to evil. Add to all this that I was to a great degree ignorant of the concerns and customs of the world, the snares of Satan, and the care of souls; with many other matters necessary to the due qualification of a minister of the gospel. But I was now in the best school, and notwithstanding my sluggishness, and unspeakable slowness to learn, God began to teach, and still teaches me.

Soon after my first ordination I met with your *Cardiphonia*, and read it again

and again with a most unreserved assent, and with great pleasure and benefit. The Holy Spirit accompanied my repeated reading of it with an extraordinary measure of his quickening grace and illumination, infomuch that I hold myself indebted under God to that book for much spiritual knowledge and comfort, and for much encouragement to all goodness. I now began to minute down the remarkable occurrences of every day, whether deeds or experiences; a practice, which though it may, occasionally perhaps, furnish fuel to pride and the evil imaginations of the heart, I cannot sufficiently recommend as an help to memory, and as the means of placing

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constantly in our view many memorials of divine love and faithfulness, and of God's wisdom and power displayed in his dispensations towards us; together with not a few, of our own unfaithfulness and folly; thus affording us continual matter of humiliation, admiration, praise and amendment.

I shall add to what I have premised only a very short sketch of my life since, designing, on another occasion, to give it you extracted more at large from my private journals, which commence at this period.

I now enjoyed exceeding great consolation, and was filled with a divine
delight

delight never to be described. I began by little and little to see, more plainly than before, my own consummate unworthiness, and my obligations to the unspeakable grace of God. Neither wanted I daily proofs of the corruption of my heart. Taught by sad but useful experience, I observed that I was still liable to be hurried into the perpetration of whatsoever evil.

Sometimes Satan, striking suddenly such an idea into my mind, would vehemently tempt me to believe that there is neither God, nor Christ, nor heaven. I was ignorant whence the suggestion came, yet, through the grace of God, no sooner felt the temptation, than

than beginning to meditate on the great works of God and on the clear proofs every where appearing of his existence and operation, I was in few moments delivered from it. Sometimes a thought would present itself to my mind, so absurd, horrible and blasphemous, that I dare not mention it; which would teaze, and often torment me, to such a degree as to be altogether intolerable. The more I endeavoured to repel and forget it, the more closely it followed me, nor would the consideration of its extreme absurdity and wickedness suffice to release me from it. By the merciful care of God its continuance was seldom long, yet after some hours or days it would return,

return, and on the whole would cause me much vexation. Sometimes, imperfectly skilled as I was in the snares and power of Satan, I judged it the natural produce of my own heart; but in time discovered it to be the unquestionable work of the devil, that he might lead me either to blaspheme or to despair, or at least might much retard me in my christian progress. At the same time I observed, that to reason about it, or to resist it in my own strength, was useless; that my only refuge from it was in Christ, to whom I no sooner betook myself than it presently lost much of its force or left me. Having thus learned to fly with all my might to Jesus the moment
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it arose, I was in a little time set free from it altogether.

Sometimes I mounted the pulpit at this period with a wonderful measure of divine assistance, and for that reason, as I humbly hope, not without benefit to my hearers. By degrees I began to converse familiarly with some of God's people; we had now a better understanding of each other, and could love as brethren. In the mean time, after some weeks, the abovementioned proposal that I should go to P.... was agitated again, and at the same time another patron formed a design of inviting me to W....., desiring me to preach there by way of introduction, which

which done, the place should be immediately offered to me. I had now by letter fixed the day on which I should preach there, but by a surprising providential interposition the letter was never received. Soon after, I received a letter myself, which gave me to understand that I had a call to P.... if I chose to accept it.

I now poured out my most fervent prayers to God, entreating him to lead me into such a situation and by such means as might render me most serviceable to the interests of his glory and the furtherance of his gospel. After much deliberation and prayer I became sensible that it was the will of God that
I should

I should leave my native country, and dwell at a great distance from it. My desire was to go soon to R...., but God interposed many hindrances, the effect of which was that some months passed before I had opportunity to go thither. So it pleased God in his wisdom to order it, that I might acquire more knowledge of myself, of the world, and of divine things, before I should enter on the ministerial office. I travelled through a variety of dangers to B...., where, and in the neighbourhood, I preached once or twice, and had the assistance of the Holy Spirit. After my last ordination I sojourned awhile at M...., at which place, spending much time in studious solitude,

solitude, prayer and meditation; I was favoured with extraordinary comforts, such as I had never known, and with unspeakable heart-felt anticipations of celestial glory. Here I enjoyed a heaven on earth, and frequently burned with desires, hardly supportable, to die, that I might be with God. Here I resolved firmly and finally, to take an everlasting leave of all studies and employments that have not a direct tendency to promote the purposes that I had most at heart. Here I had such views of the glory of God in Christ as no words can express, and such as filled me with a delight unspeakably superior to all earthly enjoyments. Now were my prayers and thanksgivings every

every day much varied and enlarged—divine truth beamed on me with a clearer light, and the gospel was my daily nourishment and joy. Yet with all this comfort I had continual lamentable intimations of the force, and fury of in-dwelling corruption.

Afterward, during my residence at N..... it pleased God to prepare me more and more for my most important office. Hitherto, I little understood how to avail myself of Christ on all occasions, as made unto us of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; what it is to live through him a life of faith daily; and

M

to

to derive, by a continual act of faith, a supply of all our wants out of his fullness. I now began, gradually, to perceive more clearly, that without Christ I could do nothing, but that in his strength all things were possible to me, and that it behoved me to fly to him in all emergencies, that he might enlighten and animate me, and afford me the strength requisite for the right performance of every duty. Henceforth, it became my chief desire and purpose, whatsoever business I undertook and at whatsoever time, whether I read, prayed, meditated, or preached, to direct the aspirations of my inmost soul to Christ, in a consciousness of

of my own weakness and insufficiency, that as a member of his mystical body I might receive from him, the head of it, such quickening influences as might render me apt for every service to which my duty should call me, and qualify me for its due performance. With the apostle I ardently desired, then, and still desire, that not I may live, but Christ in me; so that the whole life that I live in the flesh I may live by the faith of the Son of God; who loved me and gave himself for me. Christ was now become to me an overflowing fountain and giver, of all wisdom, comfort and spiritual strength, in prayer to whom I sought, earnestly, a

just and becoming sense of my own condition, and suitable aid from him for all my occasions.

At the same time it pleased God, in his unsearchable wisdom and according to the riches of his love, to permit me to be pestered with most painful and unusual temptations of the devil; so that, sometimes, the whole host of hell combined would seem to assail me with all their fury. By this, I believe, God principally purposed to preserve me from being exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations made to me, and that I might be furnished out of my own experience with

with means of teaching and comforting others afflicted in like manner. Occasionally, at the same time, I was favoured in an uncommon measure with the presence and assistance of the Lord Jesus, his grace was sufficient for me, his power was perfected in my weakness, so that I came off conqueror, and singing songs of victory.

Since I have been an inhabitant of this country, God has not ceased to instruct and to bear with me, wretch and ungrateful as I am. Till now I very imperfectly understood what it is to do all things to the glory of God, all things for him, and to him. In my

reading, meditations and prayers, I had myself principally in view ; proposing to derive from those exercises some nourishment, some spiritual consolation. I now began to be more sensibly convinced that God is most worthy, for whom, and to whom, we should do all things, and that it ought to be my principal concern, and the object of my unremitting attention, to see that God be glorified, in me and by me, as much as possible. It is now my wish to make it my enquiry every hour, what is the will of God, and how may his glory be most promoted by me ? to ask myself continually, not what my own convenience and comfort

fort demand, but what, the honour of God, and the love of a dying Saviour?

About the same time I began also more clearly to apprehend, and with a most grateful impression of the subject, to feel, what are the unsearchable riches of the love of God in Christ, which pass all comprehension now, and can never be fully known hereafter. Hence I was taught more perfectly my own ingratitude and unworthiness, and my unspeakable obligation to live entirely for Christ, to seek the glory of God in all things, and joyfully to suffer the scorn of men, their mockery and persecutions. Seriously I prayed and cease not to pray, that Christ may be the

subject of all my thoughts, the object of my chief desires, that his praises may be my constant theme, that I may direct all my actions to his glory—and oh that my life, and my prayers, were less at variance!

In the mean time I had to contend with many and grievous sins, especially with carnal appetite, with pride and with the fear of man; making, while I enjoyed a heaven on earth, a most unworthy return for my great privileges and extraordinary consolations.

In the performance of both public and private duty I enjoyed a wonderful portion

portion of divine assistance, with which I am still favoured. Nor has God suffered my endeavours, though feeble and contaminated with much abominable self-seeking, to be altogether fruitless. On the contrary, he has frequently accompanied them with his effectual operations in an extraordinary manner.

God has given me largely of the good things of this world, so that I am enabled to assist others, and even in this way to contribute something to the enlargement of Christ's kingdom; a blessing which I hope ever to number among my greatest privileges and pleasures.

I have

I have undergone painful diseases and many other afflictions, but God has strengthened, healed and delivered me. Many a time he has saved me and vouchsafed me astonishing answers of prayer.

For some time past and at present, God teaches me in my prayers and meditations to dwell much on the subject of his great glory manifested in the government of the world, and in the lot that he assigns both to nations and individuals, with a reference to the prosperity of his church; but to admire principally the glorious display of himself in the work of redemption,
and

and the harmony of all his attributes and perfections in the person and in the work of Christ, which the more I contemplate, the more I see to be both unspeakable and past all comprehension. Now also, as at all other times, the Lord constrains me to learn, by sorrowful experience, the dreadful and utter depravity of my nature, my vileness, my unworthiness. You would hardly—perhaps you would not at all, believe what passes within me, and what are the frequent imaginations of my heart. At this very moment I am the subject of a most afflictive and miserable temptation, which fills me sometimes with anguish and threatens me

me with a terrible fall. But the Lord is faithful—he will keep me and lead me, and bring me safe into his glorious kingdom. Oh that I could pray more, and could be more watchful! Oh that I could live more for him, who lived entirely for me! Unite with me in prayer, and let us praise his name together.

I am ever Your's,

P. A. . . Oct. 1789.

CHRISTODULUS.

A P-

APPENDIX.

Extract of a Letter lately received.

MY health has been on the decline since I wrote last. I am daily troubled with a violent cough; added to which, I suffer much in the night from the weak state of my nerves, and am greatly unfitted for conversation in the day time. Notwithstanding which I am so remarkably, I had almost said, miraculously, supported, by the Lord our strength, that I continue to exercise my public ministry. And, though I am often unable to speak a quarter of an hour in company, yet in public I am favoured with that assistance, and my powers are so wonderfully strengthened and renewed, that

I can

I can still preach for an hour or longer, though not without feeling myself much fatigued. Indeed, if I consulted human prudence, I should scarcely venture into the pulpit; and I sometimes think myself rash for attempting it, considering my present great bodily weakness. But when I consider the immense power and love of that Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, I cannot find myself at liberty to withdraw from the duties of my office; especially as I am so frequently and abundantly assisted in it, by help obtained from him, and hitherto I am not ashamed. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for me, and his power is manifested, and glorified, in my weakness. Do you join with me in celebrating his praise.

Every new day affords me new proofs both of the depravity, wickedness, folly and obstinacy of my own heart, and of the unspeakable patience, and wonderful free love of our Lord Jesus. Neither prosperity nor adversity render me either wiser or better.

better. At times, I am willing to hope that I shall make a more suitable return, for the many and great benefits the goodness of God heaps upon me—and I say to myself, surely I shall not, henceforth, be so ungrateful as formerly, nor suffer my gratitude and zeal to be retarded by levities and trifles! But, alas! very soon is my hope disappointed. I mean great things, but I perform them not. The good which I would, I do not; the evil which I would not, I do. Oh! that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep and bemoan my ingratitude to my Lord, and my bountiful Benefactor.

Ah! it well behoves me to think of him every moment, every moment to direct the warmest emotions and aspirations of my heart to him, to make every thing an occasion of exalting and praising him, and seriously to enquire every hour, yea every minute of my life, what is acceptable in his sight, and how I may please him,

and

and live to him alone. He is worthy, most worthy, yea only worthy of my most intense love, my absolute devotedness, my most perfect obedience. Most worthy that all I can do or possess, all my powers and faculties of body or mind, should, without reserve or exception, be consecrated to him. But, alas! my ingratitude! How faint are my perceptions of that reverence, love, admiration and obligation, which should always raise and inflame my heart towards him. If you could penetrate the inward recesses of my mind, and discern the evils which lie hidden there; if you could know how I sometimes indulge them, and with what obstinate rashness I venture to turn from the right path, you would greatly commiserate me. When I think of these things, and compare them with the innumerable benefits the Lord has bestowed upon me, and the comfortable manifestations of his glory and love, so often afforded me, I see abundant cause to acknowledge myself the chief of sinners, and the least of all saints. And yet such

is the pride of my heart, that I am seldom heartily willing to believe how vile I am.

For some time past, partly owing to the weakness of my body, but chiefly to a dull and groveling disposition of mind, a great part of the day passes, and I have done nothing. Sometimes I can neither think, nor speak, nor write. Yea many hours are wasted in the most idle, trifling and absurd reveries. Oh shameful abuse and loss of time never to be recalled! Yet in my morning and evening prayers, the Lord helps me, and I have that perception of his gracious presence, which revives and strengthens my mind, and dispels every dark cloud.

Upon the whole, this is my chief desire, that for the uncertain remainder of my time, I may give wholly to the Lord, and for him—that I may be more and more conformable to his will, and that from day to day, with a mind enlightened by

his

his Holy Spirit, I may so behold his glory, as to be transformed into his image, and that he may live and work in me—that I may, without the least reserve, commit myself to his direction, and with a simple patient faith, wait his pleasure, with respect to all that is future. Perhaps I shall write to you no more. Perhaps this may be the last letter you will receive from me; and, perhaps, before it reaches you, I shall have already left this world. Should you hear of my departure, do not mourn, but rather rejoice and praise God on my behalf; I am well persuaded that Christ is my life, and therefore death will not be loss, but gain to me.

Oh! happy and glorious hour, when I shall be delivered from all trouble and sin, from this body of death, from the wicked world, and from the snares of Satan! When I shall appear before my Saviour without spot; and shall so behold his glory, and be filled with his presence, as to be wholly and forever engaged in adoration, admiration,

ration, gratitude and love! What should I fear?
Jesus died and lives for me! For what should I
grieve? Jesus is mine, and with him I have all
things. Yet a little while, and every evil shall
cease; I shall see him as he is, and be with him
for ever!

Your's,

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